

City Council Hearing: May 3, 2011

To: Madam Mayor and Members of City Council

Re: Appeal to render Brinkerhoff Avenue a one-way street with diagonal parking

At the March 30th HLC Hearing, not one HLC member agreed with the consent hearing request to make Brinkerhoff Avenue a one-way street with diagonal parking. I agree with the comments made by members of the HLC and am strongly opposed to diagonal parking on Brinkerhoff for the reasons below.

1. Burden to the East Side.

The current 41 space parking strip on the east side of Brinkerhoff Ave. looks like the parking strip of a mall. It's a continuous strip containing all manner of vehicles: cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks. And, it has a constant presence: morning, noon and night. In fact, it acts as a "wall", visually separating the east and west side of the street. The west side benefits in that its sidewalks and gardens are unmolested; too, the west side is opened to traffic and view. The east side bears the burden, including headlights & noise from evening parkers.

2. Devaluation of Brinkerhoff's former character and charm.

A one page Sunset magazine article from the early 1980s, entitled "19th Century Santa Barbara on Brinkerhoff Avenue," lauded our street's "throwback charm to another era." Also in the 1980s, Brinkerhoff's Business Group published a brochure, exclaiming that "Brinkerhoff Avenue alone reflects the area's turn-of-the-century visual character and for this reason it has been designated a special historic district by the City of Santa Barbara."

I believe it is this "throwback charm" and "visual character" that the HLC seeks to preserve....as do I. And that makes Brinkerhoff a special gem. The requested diagonal parking is a major departure from that. It is discordant in design to angle vehicles to the parallel streets & sidewalks. Moreover, in loading all manner of vehicles on the east side only, there is an imbalance and the block is split into 2

visual entities. The original Parallel Parking Design is visually simpler...calmer...historic...and consistent with parking standards citywide. As Urban Historian Jacobus has said at the HLC hearing, Brinkerhoff's original design plan allowed for/created an outdoor room of cottages (on both sides and ends) which surrounded an open space of parallel streets and sidewalks which spoke of unity and simplicity and calm. The current plan, according to Jacobus, maintains the cottage rim, but substantially changes the spatial relationships due to what I see as the "vehicle wall".

3. Absence of Neighborhood Meeting

No neighborhood meeting was ever held in order to brainstorm potential solutions which might have been acceptable to the HLC in preserving the neighborhood aesthetic and history and in substantially satisfying neighbor concerns for parking availability and/or convenience.

Summary.

Any chipping away at the visual part of the original Brinkerhoff Design is detrimental to its historic & spatial context. We on Brinkerhoff will come & go, but the Brinkerhoff Landmark District has its own life, one with a special quality of charm and simplicity that will live way beyond us. Its context will become ever more precious and rare as time moves on.

Please do not allow our street to become just another unattractive shopping mall parking strip, a so-called upgrade to "easy" parking--instant gratification. Brinkerhoff deserves way better than that--for *everyone*.

Thank you.

Caroline Vassallo


514 Brinkerhoff Avenue

PARALLEL PARKING ON BRINKERHOFF



DIAGONAL PARKING ON BRINKERHOFF





DIAGONAL PARKING - EAST SIDE - BRINKERHOFF

